

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: POSITIONS HARDEN IN JANATA PARTY CRISIS

REF: NEW DELHI 10219

1. THE CRISIS WITHIN THE JANATA PARTY BROUGHT ON BY THE OUSTER
OF CHARAN SINGH AND RAJ NARAIN FROM THE CABINET ENTERED A
NEW AND MORE CRITICAL PHASE JULY 4 AS BOTH SIDES ADOPTED HARD-
ENED POSITIONS IN THE CONTROVERSY. IN A DEFIANT MOOD, SUP-
PORTERS OF THE FALLEN HOME MINISTER ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WERE
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ORGANIZING A MAMMOTH "KISAN SAMMELEN (PEASANT RALLY) TO BE
HELD IN NEW DELHI ON JULY 17, THE OPENING DAY OF THE MONSOON
SESSION OF PARLIAMENT. THE RALLY, WHICH COULD BE EVEN LARGER
THAN THE ONE HELD LAST DECEMBER IN CONNECTION WITH CHARAN
SINGH'S BIRTHDAY, IS BEING ORGANIZED TO EXPRESS PEASANT SOLI-
DARITY WITH CHARAN SINGH AND TO PROTEST HIS SUMMARY DISMISSAL
FROM THE GOVERNMENT. IN A SIMILARLY TOUGH AND UNCOMPROMISING

MOOD, THE JANATA'S PARLIAMENTARY BOARD MET LATE ON JULY 4 AND ASKED DEVI LAL, AN OUTSPOKEN CHARAN SINGH LOYALISTS, TO RESIGN AS CHIEF MINISTER OF HARYANA. DEVI LAL HAS COME UNDER RENEWED ATTACK FROM DISSIDENT MLA'S IN THE ASSEMBLY (NOW APPARENTLY JOINED BY THE JANA SANGHIS) FOR HIS PRO-CHARAN SINGH POSTURE. THE PARLIAMENTARY BOARD DIRECTED ALL JANATA MLA'S IN HARYANA TO ELECT A NEW CHIEF MINISTER ON JULY 7. THE BOARD'S STERN ACTION CAME AS A RESULT OF DEVI LAL'S REFUSAL TO RETRACT HIS CHARGE THAT A "CONSPIRACY OF HIGHER-UPS" IN THE JANATA HAD FORCED CHARAN SINGH'S DISMISSAL AND ALSO AS A RESULT OF HIS REFUSAL TO DISSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM PLANS TO HOLD THE JULY 17 PEASANT RALLY. DEVI LAL QUICKLY TERMED THE BOARD'S DECISION AS "UNCONSTITUTIONAL."

2. WITH THE BATTLES LINES BETWEEN PRO AND ANTI-CHARAN SINGH FORCES NOW HARDENING, THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE CHANGE OF A LAST-MINUTE COMPROMISE TO AVERT AN OPEN BREAK IN THE JANATA. SOME OBSERVERS HERE BELIEVE SUCH A SPLIT IS INEVITABLE, AND THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" EDITORIALIZED TODAY THAT "ONLY A MIRACLE CAN PREVENT A SCHISM." NONETHELESS, RENEWED EFFORTS SEEM TO BE UNDERWAY TO AVERT A SPLIT. FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE CANCELLED HIS PLANS TO ATTEND AN ECOSOC MEETING IN GENEVA AND LET IT BE KNOWN THAT HE INTENDED TO CALL ON CHARAN SINGH TO SEEK TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK. THE WIRE SERVICES REPORT TODAY (JULY 5) THAT JANATA PRESIDENT CHARDRA SHEKHAR AND GENERAL SECRETARY NANAJI DESHMUKH FLEW TO PATNA THIS MORNING AND HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ENGAGED IN LONG DISCUSSIONS WITH JANATA ELDER STATESMAN J.P. NARAYAN.

3. FOR THEIR PART, SOME OF CHARAN SINGH'S SUPPORTERS SEEM INTENT ON FORCING A BREAK. SOME ARE NOW OPENLY ATTACKING THE PRIME MINISTER. MRS. CHANDRAWATI, CHIEF ORGANIZER OF THE JULY 17 RALLY (AN MP AND PRESIDENT OF THE JANATA UNIT IN HARYANA) HAS TOLD THE PRESS THAT DESPITE THE ACTION AGAINST DEVI LAL THE RALLY WILL BE HELD. THE RALLY COULD SET THE STAGE FOR THE FORMATION OF CHARAN SINGH'S OWN PARTY FOUNDED ON HIS SUPPORT AMONG THE "BACKWARD" PEASANT CASTES OF NORTH INDIA.

4. THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER RESIGNATIONS FROM THE UNION CABINET, BUT TWO FORMER BLD MINISTERS IN RAJASTHAN'S STATE JANATA GOVERNMENT HAVE RESIGNED IN SYMPATHY WITH CHARAN SINGH. THIS SHOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE STATE GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, SINCE THE BLD IS ONLY A MINOR PARTNER IN RAJASTHAN. (ACCORDING TO ONE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT, ONE OF THE RESIGNING MINISTERS ACCUSED PM DESAI OF "SELLING OUT" TO THE U.S. WHEN DURING HIS RECENT VISIT HE PROMISED U.S. LEADERS THAT INDIA WOULD NOT CONDUCT PNE'S. IN THEIR EAGERNESS TO FIND PRETEXTS FOR ATTACKING MORARJI, CHARAN SINGH'S LOYALISTS MAY REPEAT THIS ANTI-

U.S. REFRAIN.) IN ADDITION, THE TREASURER OF THE JANATA PARLIAMENTARY PARTY HAS RESIGNED. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER KARPOORI THAKUR, A SUPPOSED CHARAN SINGH FOLLOWER, HAS POINTEDLY DECLINED TO ASSOCIATE HIMSELF WITH THE JULY 17 PROTEST RALLY. U.P. CHIEF MINISTER RAM NARESH YADAV, THE THIRD BLD CHIEF MINISTER, HAS REMAINED SILENT ON THE ISSUE.

5. ON THE CABINET FRONT, IT NOW APPEARS THAT PRIME MINISTER DESAI MAY NOT NAME REPLACEMENTS FOR CHARAN SINGH AND RAJ NARAIN FOR AT LEAST A WEEK AND PERHAPS NOT UNTIL THE END OF PARLIAMENT'S MONSOON SESSION, PROBABLY NEAR THE END OF AUGUST.

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